UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/49/805
21 December 1994
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC/ENGLISH

Forty-ninth session
Agenda item 111

PATTERN OF CONFERENCES

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Larbi DJACTA (Algeria)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 23 September 1994, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its forty-ninth session the item entitled "Pattern of conferences" and to allocate it to the Fifth Committee.

2. The Fifth Committee considered the item at its 26th, 27th, 30th and 35th meetings, held on 30 November and 2, 6 and 20 December 1994. Statements and observations made in the course of the discussion of the item and replies to queries raised are reflected in the relevant summary records (A/C.5/47/SR.26, 27, 30 and 35).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Committee on Conferences (A/49/32 and Corr.1 and Add.1-3); 1/

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the legal basis and experience of all subsidiary bodies that meet away from their established headquarters (A/49/212);

1/ To be issued in final form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 32 and corrigendum (A/49/32 and Corr.1).

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on the review of, inter alia, the need for and usefulness and timely issuance of verbatim and summary records (A/49/276 and Add.1 and 2);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on control and limitation of documentation: implementation of the rules and regulations on control and limitation of documentation: compliance with the six-week rule for the issuance of pre-session documentation (A/49/531);

(e) Letters dated 1 September and 8 December 1994 from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences to the President of the General Assembly (A/49/351 and Add.1);

(f) Report of the Secretary-General on the consolidated statement of scheduled special conferences for 1995 (A/C.5/49/2/Rev.1);

(g) Report of the Secretary-General on the comprehensive study on conference services (A/C.5/49/34 and Corr.1).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.5/49/L.15

4. At the 35th meeting, on 20 December, following informal consultations, the Chairman introduced a draft resolution entitled "Pattern of conferences" (A/C.5/49/L.15).

5. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.5/49/L.15 without a vote (see para. 7).

6. Before the adoption of the draft resolution, a statement was made by the representative of Mexico. After the adoption of the draft resolution, a statement in explanation of position was made by the representative of Cuba (see A/C.5/49/SR.35).

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

7. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Pattern of conferences

A

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on Conferences, 2/

2/ A/49/32 and Corr.1 and Add.1-3.

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including resolutions 43/222 B of 21 December 1988, 46/190 of 20 December 1991, 47/202 of 22 December 1992 and 48/222 of 23 December 1993,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the work of the Committee on Conferences;

2. Approves the draft revised calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1995 as submitted by the Committee on Conferences; 3/

3. Authorizes the Committee on Conferences to make adjustments in the calendar of conferences and meetings for 1995 that may become necessary as a result of actions and decisions taken by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session;

4. Invites the competent legislative organs to disband all bodies dealing with apartheid pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/258 of 23 June 1994;

5. Invites United Nations bodies to avoid holding meetings on 2 March and 9 May 1995, and invites the Secretariat, when drafting future calendars of conferences and meetings, to take these arrangements into account;

6. Decides that the waiver to the headquarters rule contained in General Assembly resolution 40/243 of 18 December 1985 should be:

(a) Discontinued in the case of the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in view of the transfer of that body to Vienna and the decision of that body to hold its meetings at Vienna in future;

(b) Reformulated in the case of the Economic and Social Council, in the light of the measure adopted by the Assembly in paragraph 5 (c) of the annex to its resolution 45/264 of 13 May 1991, whereby one substantive session of the Council of four to five weeks' duration takes place in alternate years in New York and Geneva between May and July;

(c) Discontinued in the case of the functional commissions of the Council, as they have not exercised their right to meet away since 1985.

B

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions on the control and limitation of documentation, including resolutions 33/56 of 14 December 1978, 36/117 B of 10 December 1981, 37/14 C of 16 November 1982, 45/238 B of 21 December 1990, 47/202 B of 22 December 1992 and 48/222 B of 23 December 1993,

Bearing in mind the views expressed on this item by Member States in the Fifth Committee during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly,

---

3/ A/49/32 and Corr.1, annex I.

Recognizing the existing practice of Member States, through intergovernmental or expert bodies, to request reports,

Commending the initiatives to control and limit documentation taken by the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund in its decisions 94/4 of 18 February 1994 and 94/24 of 16 June 1994,

Recalling the decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council in previous years to control and limit documentation, in particular, those contained in its resolutions 1988/77 of 29 July 1988 and 1989/114 of 28 July 1989 and its decision 1990/272 of 27 July 1990, and noting that some documents are still not being submitted on time and within established guidelines for page-limits,

Noting with satisfaction that the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund have decided to dispense with summary records,

Agreeing on the need for and desirability of verbatim and summary records for some bodies of a political or legal nature, while affirming the need to review procedures and to streamline, as appropriate, the provision of meeting records,

Seeking to encourage bodies entitled to meeting records to review their need for such records,

1. Invites the bodies established by the Charter of the United Nations to review their entitlement to meeting records, and appeals to the treaty bodies authorized to establish their own practice in the matter to review their need for such records;

2. Decides that meeting records should be provided as set forth in the annex to the present resolution;

3. Requests the following bodies to submit, in accordance with existing procedures, to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, through the Committee on Conferences, justifications for the continuation of the current entitlement to meeting records:

(a) United Nations Administrative Tribunal (when holding oral hearings);

(b) Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;

(c) First Committee;

(d) Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

(e) Subsidiary organs of the General Assembly that meet on the occasion of international days of solidarity proclaimed by the Assembly;

(f) Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

4. Reiterates its request that the chairmen of the relevant organs and subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, its subsidiary bodies and other United Nations bodies should propose to Member States, at the beginning of each session, the adoption of time-limits for speakers;

5. Decides that meeting records should be issued in a timely fashion;

6. Also decides to adopt the following measures for limiting documentation:

(a) Documents originating in the Secretariat should be clear and concise, generally not exceeding the established page-limits, except in cases where this is necessary in order to provide the information required by intergovernmental and expert bodies; to this end, the Secretary-General should keep the existing practice for the control and limitation of documentation under review, in order to reduce the length of documents wherever possible;

(b) Reports of subsidiary organs should be action-oriented and concise and should contain precise information confined to a description of the work done by the organ concerned, to the conclusions it has reached, to its decisions and to its recommendations to the General Assembly;

(c) The Secretariat is requested to ensure that documentation is available, in each of the official languages of the United Nations, in accordance with the six-week rule for the distribution of documents;

(d) The Secretariat is also requested, before a legislative mandate requesting documentation is adopted by the General Assembly, to indicate whether that documentation can be prepared in accordance with the six-week rule and existing relevant budgetary procedures;

(e) Member States and subsidiary organs of the General Assembly are requested to exercise, to the fullest extent possible, restraint in making proposals that contain requests for reports, in full compliance with decisions on the rationalization of the programme of work;

7. Takes note of the content of annex II to the report of the Committee on Conferences, 4/ and requests the Secretariat to follow up on it and to report thereon to the Committee at its substantive session of 1995.

4/ A/49/32 and Corr.1.

ANNEX

Entitlement to written meeting records

1. Bodies continuing to receive verbatim records:

(a) Security Council;

(b) Military Staff Committee;

(c) General Assembly (plenary meetings);

(d) Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (for hearings of witnesses);

(e) United Nations Administrative Tribunal (when holding oral hearings);

(f) Trusteeship Council;

(g) Conference on Disarmament (on the understanding that the Conference receives verbatim records from full statements as delivered and checked by the delegations concerned but without the use of verbatim reporters);

(h) Disarmament Commission;

(i) Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;

(j) First Committee;

(k) Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

(l) Subsidiary organs of the General Assembly that meet on the occasion of international days of solidarity proclaimed by the General Assembly.

2. Bodies for which summary records will be provided:

(a) General Committee and Main Committees of the General Assembly;

(b) Subsidiary organs of the Security Council;

(c) Economic and Social Council (plenary meetings);

(d) International Law Commission;

(e) Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean;

(f) Commission on Human Rights and Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities;

(g) Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People;

(h) Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space - Legal Subcommittee;

(i) Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

(j) United Nations Commission on International Trade Law;

(k) Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

(l) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination:

(i) Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination;

(ii) Meetings of States parties;

(m) Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment:

(i) Committee against Torture;

(ii) Meetings of States parties;

(n) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women;

(o) Convention on the Rights of the Child:

(i) Committee on the Rights of the Child;

(ii) Meetings of States parties;

(p) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:

(i) Human Rights Committee;

(ii) Meetings of States parties.

3. Bodies for which meeting records will no longer be provided: Committee on Applications for Review of Administrative Tribunal Judgements (except if the Committee requests an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice).

C

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the comprehensive study on conference services, 5/

1. Endorses the findings and conclusions of the comprehensive study on conference services, subject to the provisions of the present resolution;

2. Welcomes the efforts made by the Secretary-General to improve conference services, and urges the Secretariat to continue exploring ways and means of providing conference services in a manner that fully responds to the needs of intergovernmental and expert bodies, while ensuring the criteria of quality and timeliness;

3. Requests the Secretary-General, within the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, to take into account the possible negative effects, if any, of the elimination of nineteen posts in the Office of Conference and Support Services;

4. Also requests the Secretary-General, in particular, to take into account the requirements for conference services arising from the increased workload of the Security Council and, consequently, of the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions;

5. Further requests the Secretary-General, in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, to include more transparent performance indicators, better cost information on meetings and documentation and a detailed analysis of real demand for conference services;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly recommendations on language training to be included in the programme budget proposals for the biennium 1996-1997, for the purpose of keeping interpreters and translators current with the latest developments in the six official languages of the United Nations.

D

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming that the development of friendly relations among nations could lead to a strengthening of universal peace and the promotion of international cooperation in solving international problems,

Noting that the annual sessions of the General Assembly constitute the largest gathering of heads of State and Government and ministers for foreign affairs during the year,

---

5/ A/C.5/49/34 and Corr.1.

Bearing in mind the marked increase in the membership of the United Nations in recent years,

Noting the consequential increase in demand for facilities for bilateral meetings and direct contacts between heads of State and Government and ministers for foreign affairs of member countries during the annual sessions of the General Assembly,

Recognizing that bilateral meetings and direct contacts among Member States are important elements in helping to promote the purposes and principles of the United Nations,

Convinced that the United Nations has an important role to play in facilitating such bilateral meetings and contacts among Member States,

1. Notes that existing facilities in the Indonesian and Chinese lounges have become inadequate for the holding of bilateral meetings and contacts among Member States during the annual sessions of the General Assembly;

2. Requests the Secretary-General as a matter of priority to improve the arrangements and meeting facilities in the Indonesian and Chinese lounges with a view to enabling more bilateral meetings and contacts among Member States to take place;

3. Also requests the Secretary-General to make available other venues for such meetings;

4. Calls upon the Secretariat to examine the possibility of instituting an equitable and efficient system for the use of these facilities and venues;

5. Requests the Secretariat to implement these improvements in time for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations;

6. Decides that such improvements shall be made within existing resources.